

To: Gray, David[gray.david@epa.gov]
From: Purchia, Liz
Sent: Sat 8/8/2015 12:39:35 PM
Subject: Fwd: TPs for Gold King Mine

FYI if you want to add anything about our commitment to sharing information as soon as possible

Liz Purchia
U.S. EPA
202-564-6691
202-841-2230

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Purchia, Liz" <Purchia.Liz@epa.gov>
Date: August 8, 2015 at 8:29:52 AM EDT
To: "Smith, Paula" <Smith.Paula@epa.gov>, "Lee, Monica" <Lee.Monica@epa.gov>
Cc: "Harrison, Melissa" <Harrison.Melissa@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: TPs for Gold King Mine

Paula - Here is a first round of edits.

DRAFT STATEMENT:

On Wednesday, August 5, U.S. EPA and State Division of Reclamation Mining and Safety workers investigating a contamination at the Gold King Mine in San Juan County, Colorado, unexpectedly triggered a large release of mine waste water into the upper portions of Cement Creek.

EPA takes responsibility for the incident and is working closely with first responders and state and local officials to ensure the safety of citizens exposed to water contaminated by the spill. EPA Region 8 is also in close coordination with Region 6 and Region 9 and the states of Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Southern Ute Tribe and Navajo Nation. The Agency is taking the lead on efforts to contain the leak and flow from the mine is now controlled. EPA is sharing information as quickly as possible with the community as experts work to analyze any effects the spill may have on drinking water and public health. Regular updates on the response for the public and the media are scheduled throughout the weekend to keep everyone involved updated on the data being collected. The latest updates and information on the response at available at: Website link

Need to highlight how we are communicating with the community. The biggest concern seems to be that this is a remote area and ppl do not have access to Internet

BACKGROUND ON THE RESPONSE

Initial estimates are that the release contained approximately one million gallons of water that was held behind unconsolidated debris near an abandoned mine portal. There were several workers at the site at the time of the breach, all were unharmed.

Include breakdown of the data samples gathered from the ponds.

Give the full extent of the response - stats on folks in the field, # of samples collected and our approach going forward, results and when we expect to have more, etc.

Next Steps – Build out so people can understand the breadth of what we’re doing

- Today, EPA is building settling ponds today to contain it – the upper pond will be completed by early afternoon, and the lower one by COB or early tomorrow.
- There is plenty of caustic soda and flocculent on-site to provide treatment once the pond is built.
- Continue to sample water and monitor plume
- Continue to collect and present data
- Coordinate with R6, R9, state of CO and local entities
- Provide status updates with HQ, media and public

Updated Timeline of Events –Build out and revise so this is it is more complete and understandable to the average reporter

8/5/15

Blowout Occurs (10:30am)
Safety of On Site Personnel is Secured

CDPHE notified (12:40 pm)

Notifications to Durango, San Juan Basin Health Dept., and water intakes complete by (1:30 pm)

Report to National Response Center (2:30 pm)

Tribe Notified

EPA Issues First Press Release (11:26)

EPA Begins Sampling (know first round collected at 6pm, we think they started earlier but cannot confirm right now)

Plume Reaches Silverton (11:30am)

8/6/15

EPA Stand Up REOC (10:00)

HQs, R6 and R9 are Notified (11:00)

Animas is Closed to Recreational Users (coordination with locals and ATSDR to make decision at approximately 10:30; we saw official printed release later in the afternoon).

Durango Treatment Plant is Secure per Reports from Water Program (3:45)

Plume Reaches Durango (late afternoon)

EPA Deploys Additional OSC, ASPECT, Personnel (varied, beginning at 12:30)

EPA Issued PolRep (approx. 3:30)

8/7/15

ASPECT Flyover (initiated at 0730, found extent of plume at 830-lat/longs received, map pending)

Sampling and Monitoring Data is Available (pending-expecting initial sample results around noon).

From: Smith, Paula

Sent: Friday, August 7, 2015 9:39 PM
To: Purchia, Liz; Lee, Monica
Cc: Harrison, Melissa
Subject: TPs for Gold King Mine

Thanks for your help in getting these in shape for web posting.

- Paula